

till the annual village festival, at which the  
*Kourlana* is  
always celebrated.<sup>1</sup>

The whole interior of the church of  
Kochanes is  
covered by a plain vaulted stone roof. At  
the west  
end of the nave is a row of oblong stone  
tombs, four  
feet high, in which several of the patriarchs  
are buried;  
and a steep narrow stone stair leads from  
these to a  
small door high up in the north wall, which  
gives access  
to a small chamber in which the priest  
prepares and  
bakes the bread for the Holy Communion.  
The flour  
for this purpose is preferably of wheat which  
has been  
gleaned by girls. It is ground in a hand-  
mill and is  
mixed with "holy leaven," handed on from  
sacrament to  
sacrament. The bread is made into round  
cakes, a  
quarter of an inch thick and two and a half  
inches in  
diameter, which are stamped with a cross.  
Great import-  
ance is attached to the elements, and the  
water used for  
mixing with the sacramental wine is always  
brought from  
the purest spring within reach.<sup>2</sup>

On one side of this upper chamber, at a  
height of four  
feet, there is the mouth of a sort of tunnel  
which runs  
between the flat exterior roof and the  
vaulted ceiling  
of the nave. This is used for concealing the  
Liturgies  
and the other poor valuables of the church  
in times of  
peril. Secret as this hiding-place is, the  
Kurds dis-  
covered it some years ago, and carried  
off and de-

<sup>1</sup> For the correction of my very imperfect  
investigations into the re-  
ligious customs of the Syrians, I am indebted to a  
very careful and

learned paper by Canon Maclean, *Some Account of the Customs of the Eastern Syrian Churches*, originally published in the *Guardian*, and now to be obtained at the office of "The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians, 2 Deans Yard, Westminster."

<sup>2</sup> A singular legend is told regarding the origin of the sacred leaven and the sacred oil.

The Syrians say that as our Lord went up out of the Jordan after His baptism John the Baptist collected in a phial the baptismal water as it dropped from His sacred person, giving it before his death to St. John the